

## SPSO decision report



**Case:** 202103331, A Medical Practice in the Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board area  
**Sector:** Health  
**Subject:** Clinical treatment / diagnosis  
**Decision:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

C, a support and advocacy worker, complained on behalf of their client (A). A presented to the practice with symptoms of stomach pain and upper and lower backpain. Following several consultations, a GP referred A for an abdominal and renal ultrasound on a routine basis. A was contacted by the hospital with an appointment and was advised that their GP could expedite this if they considered it appropriate. A was referred on an urgent basis by the practice to gastroenterology (specialism of the treatment of conditions affecting the liver, intestine and pancreas) which later confirmed A's diagnosis of cancer.

A complained to the practice that they had failed to expedite the referral despite their worsening symptoms. A believes that if they had been referred to secondary hospital services punctually and had obtained a timely diagnosis, their medical treatment would not have been as invasive and that the risk of cancer spreading to other organs would have been reduced.

In response to the complaint the practice said that an urgent referral was sent to gastroenterology when it was clear that A's symptoms had progressed. A was dissatisfied with the practice's response and C brought the complaint to our office on A's behalf.

During our investigation we requested independent advice on the practice's consultations with A and the arrangements for referring A for further investigations. We found that the decision to refer A initially on a routine basis for an ultrasound was reasonable, given A's symptoms. We found that the medical records indicated consultations with A were reasonable and on the basis of the progression of A's symptoms, there was no unreasonable delay in the urgent referral to gastroenterology being made. We found that the referrals were reasonable and there was no unreasonable delay in making them, as such we did not uphold the complaint.

We provided some feedback to the practice on the management of A's pain.